

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended. Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled. New claim 12 has been added. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-9, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,964,743 to *Abuto* et al., while claim 10 has been rejected as being unpatentable over the same reference. Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 320,314 to *Terada*. Lastly, claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the *Abuto* et al. reference in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,986,167 to *Arteman* et al. These several rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that “the liquid-pervious layer is a resin film which is extrusion laminated onto the liquid-absorbing layer and processed to have the through-holes.”

U.S. Patent No. 5,964,743 to *Abuto* et al. relates to a stretchable absorbent material for personal care products, which has a liquid permeable top sheet, a bottom sheet, and beams of an absorbent composition between the top and bottom sheets whereby the beams are spaced apart by bond rows therebetween (see *Abs.*). However, this patent fails to teach the limitation “the liquid-pervious layer is a resin film which is extrusion laminated onto the liquid-absorbing layer and processed to have the through-holes,” as set forth in amended claim 1.

U.S. Patent No. 5,986,167 to *Arteman* et al. relates to absorbent pads, and methods for fabricating absorbent pads, having improved fluid intake and preferential wicking in the longitudinal direction (see *Abs.*). However, this reference when combined with the *Abuto* et al. patent fails to teach the present claimed invention. Specifically, the combination of the *Arteman* et al. and the *Abuto* et al. patents fail to teach the limitation “the liquid-pervious layer is a resin film which is extrusion laminated onto the liquid-absorbing layer and processed to have the through-holes,” as set forth in amended claim 1.

In fact, neither U.S. Patent No. 5,964,743 to *Abuto* et al. relating to elastic absorbent material personal care products, nor U.S. Patent No. 5,986,167 to *Arteman* et al. relating to a method of distributing liquid in apertured absorbent pads, is an appropriate reference for rejecting the present application which relates to a liquid-absorbent sheet for absorbing drips that ooze from food.

EP 320,314 to *Terada* discloses an absorbent sheet which is suitable for food packing, and comprises a water absorptive non-woven sheet (see *Abs.*). This reference, however, fails to teach the limitation “the liquid-pervious layer is a resin film which is extrusion laminated onto the liquid-absorbing layer and processed to have the through-holes” and hence, fails to anticipate amended claim 1. Furthermore, even when combined with the *Arteman* et al. and the *Abuto* et al. patents, the resultant combination of the *Terada* publication and these references would not render the claim 1 obvious and unpatentable.

In sum, none of the cited references, either individually or in combination, teach or suggest the present claimed invention. Claim 1 positively recites the distinguishing features; that is, the limitation “the liquid-pervious layer is a resin film that is formed on the liquid-absorbing layer

by extrusion lamination, and is processed to have the through-holes" (support for this claimed limitation and its associated advantages can be found on page 12, lines 9-25 of the specification as originally filed). In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully assert that amended claim 1 is patentable over the cited references.

In light of the patentability of amended independent claim 1, for the reasons above, dependent claims 2-11, as well as new dependent claim 12 are all patentable over the prior art.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance. Early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. However, if there are any questions regarding this Response, or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this would expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

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Respectfully submitted,

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